

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

APR 6 1970

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
2101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20418

April 1, 1970

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Genetics Department
School of Medicine
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Josh:

This somewhat belatedly replies to your letter of 11 March with respect to the problem of "conflicts of interest" among those who work for this Academy.

Acting upon your suggestion, this matter was brought to the Academy Council last fall. The Council agreed with you but, in your view, perhaps in a somewhat limited way. The upshot has been that each member of the Academy Council -- the voting structure of the Governing Board of the National Research Council -- has filed with us a statement of his personal financial interests as have all of the senior employed officials of the NAS/NRC. We are also in the process of having similar forms completed by the members of the divisional committees of the National Research Council and of our major Academy boards.

However, the Academy Council feels it unnecessary to ask that all of the 7,500 individuals who serve on NRC committees do likewise. In general, these committees are so structured as to avoid conflicts of interest or to neutralize them whenever these are apparent in advance.

More importantly, perhaps, I freely admit that therein lies the problem. It is the divisional committees, boards and the Academy Council which must take ultimate responsibility for reports emanating from this organization. Accordingly, it is that body, collectively, which has been asked to file individual statements of their own financial holdings and interests.

HANDLER

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I certainly agree that this brings us only part of the way toward the goals which you have set for us. On the other hand it is also a long way from where we started and for that we are grateful to you. With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Phil".

Philip Handler
President